

Joseph Grief House
719-721 South 10th Street
St. Joseph
Buchanan County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1880

HABS
MO,
H-SA JOE,
23-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

Location: 719-721 South 10th Street
Lot 4, Block 10, Patee's Addition
St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri

HABS
MO,
11- SAJOE,
23-

Present Owner: Charles A. & Darlene Reed
4212 Halupa
Honolulu, HI 96818

Present Use: Vacant. This property has been declared a dangerous building and ordered repaired or demolished. It appears that the owner of record has abandoned the property.

Significance: This deteriorated residential building located at 719-721 South 10th Street has only marginal architectural integrity due to a interior fire and deterioration. It has moderate significance as an example of the Italianate duplex residential property type and is thus a contributing element of the Multiple Property context statement entitled "Historic Resources of St. Joseph." The building has been determined to be eligible under Criterion C--area of significance, architecture.

According to the context statement, to be significant under Criterion C a resource must be a good example of this property type of a type or a well-preserved example of a style. As such, it should be recognizable to the time of its construction. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are required. In addition to features outlined above, original windows, doors, and architectural features associated with a particular style should be retained.

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of erection: ca. 1870/1892

Architect: Unknown

Original Owners: Joseph Grief (attributed)

Historical Narrative:

In July of 1843, Joseph Robidoux filed the town plat for St. Joseph with the Clerk of Common Pleas in St. Louis. Robidoux had operated a trading post at this location, where Blacksnake Creek joins the Missouri River, for several years. At first he was an employee of the American Fur Company, but in 1830 he purchased their goods and interest in the post becoming sole proprietor. When the town plan was recorded in 1843, the population of the settlement was about 200 people. By December the population had increased to 500 as settlers learned of the establishment of a town.

The discovery of gold in California greatly benefitted St. Joseph. As the northern and westernmost point that could be reached by steamboat before embarking on the arduous overland trip, St. Joseph had an advantage over Independence, the settlement that had been the main point of departure for the Santa Fe Trail. The needs of outfitting thousands of emigrants passing through St. Joseph led to the establishment of several mercantile businesses. Merchandise stocks were valued at \$400,000 and in eight months during 1849 123 buildings were erected--64 of them of brick. Many emigrants, in fact, chose to remain in St. Joseph to share in the fortunes that were being made. The population, which was 800 in 1846, had jumped to 3,460 by 1850. During the 1850s, nearby Fort Leavenworth was the general depot for the distribution of supplies to all forts throughout the west. Supplying the military was another lucrative economic opportunity which helped establish St. Joseph as a regional trade and outfitting center.

By 1860 the town grew to a population of 8,932 and the original town site began to evolve into a commercial and industrial district. One more essential step in securing St. Joseph's prominence as a city and a major outfitter to the west was the completion of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad line in 1859. St. Joseph was the westernmost railroad terminus for more than ten years until the transcontinental Union Pacific railroad was completed through Omaha and Council Bluffs in 1869.

With the beginning of the Civil War, most business and construction in St. Joseph came to a halt. Residents were divided in their sympathies, as was much of Missouri, and United States troops occupied the town. Although St. Joseph served as a military supply and mobilization center, residents were not allowed to participate in this trade. Virtually no structures were built or improvements made to the town infrastructure during this period. The town declined, as evidenced by a decrease in population from approximately 10,000 in 1861 to 7,500 at the close of the war.

Prosperity returned quickly to St. Joseph after hostilities actually ended. By 1870 the population had increased to 19,565 more than twice that in 1860. In the late 1860s more railroad construction connected St. Joseph to Council Bluffs and Kansas City and opened a new route to Chicago and the east. During the 1880s about ten railroads built lines to St. Joseph making important connections with St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, Denver, and many other markets. The rail lines serviced the city center, yet skirted around it. The first depot was built south of the original river complex, as were several of the other passenger stations and freight depots. These rail lines slowly directed some of the city's growth south.

Commercial success, particularly in the wholesale/distribution business, was predominant in the history of St. Joseph. With a national (and in some cases, international) reputation as a distribution center, the city progressed steadily from frontier days through the industrialization period to the early twentieth century, serving as one of the largest and most profitable commercial centers in the country. The city's location and transportation advantages earned it the name "Queen City of the West" by the 1880s. During this period, the city's population continued to grow at a remarkable rate--to 32,431 in 1880 and 52,324 in 1890. The 1880s and 1890s became known as the "Golden Age" of St. Joseph.

719-721 South 10th Street

The duplex residence at 719-721 South 10th Street is associated with the development of St. Joseph in the mid and late nineteenth century. Located in Patee's Addition, an amalgamation of four successive plats, this residence is typical of the modest single-family or multi-unit dwellings common in this area. In his inaugural speech of 1858 Mayor Jeff Thompson specified that a market be located in the south ward of the City for the convenience of the working class so it would be close to areas where land was affordable to them. This gives the impression that early in the City's history there was a trend toward a lower social/economic class neighborhood than in the areas on the hills north of Messanie Street (i.e. Museum Hill, Cathedral Hill, Hall Street, and Robidoux Hill). By the early 1880s, industrial and commercial areas were well-established along the south and west periphery of Patee's Addition. This presence and the preference for housing on the higher land north and northeast of "Pateetown" by the more affluent citizens had a noticeable effect on the architectural character of this area.

Evidence of early residential and commercial development in Patee's First Addition by the late 1850s is referenced in Mayor Thompson's speech and in the documentation of construction of the 110-room Patee House hotel in 1858. Thompson described Patee's Addition as being "well built upon" with many brick structures and a quality hotel. The need for building Patee Market was supported by the statement of finances proposed for it and another in the "upper ward." A wood frame market house was constructed by 1860.

The Joseph Grief house was constructed ca. 1870 only one-and-a-half blocks north of the Patee Market. Also, the residence was only eight blocks away from the Union Railroad Depot at 6th and Mitchell Streets. The city's main passenger depot was completed in 1882, burned and rebuilt in 1895. It was the major structure in a sprawling railroad-industrial district west of 10th Street paralleling the Missouri River. Many of the residents in Patee's Addition had economic associations with this district as employees or businessmen.

Although the exact date of construction and original owner were not determined, it seems most likely that Joseph Grief was the property owner. A permit for water service was issued to Joseph Grief July 7, 1892 indicating that he was the owner at that time. Grief also received a building permit for a residence (\$1600) May 23, 1892, but this probably indicated an addition or remodeling because the building's Italianate architectural features are characteristic of the earlier period.

A survey of extant city directories indicated that Grief and his family resided at 721 South 10th at least from 1878 until 1907. In 1878 he was listed as a shoemaker in partnership (Langener & Grisf) with the shop located on 5th between Francis and Felix Streets. Apparently, he began his career as an independent craftsman, worked as a machine operator, and then returned to his earlier occupation until retirement about 1904. In 1878 his son, Joseph Grief, Jr., was also listed as a resident at 721 South 10th.

During the 1880s, Joseph Grief, Senior, was a sole leather cutter for the notable wholesale firm of Tootle, Hosea & Company. Another son, Robert, was recorded in the home during this decade. Robert Grief was a freight office clerk and then a telegraph operator for the Rock Island Railroad. Joseph Grief, Junior, was a clerk and then became a carrier for the post office. Curiously, a wife, Mrs. Joseph Grief, was only recorded in 1899. More research in the manuscript census schedules would be required to determine if Mr. Grief was a widower who remarried briefly or if Mrs Grief was simply undocumented in the directories.

It appears that Joseph Grief rented the building adjacent to his residence, 719 South 10th. In 1899 Moses Frank and Alex Myer, commercial travelers, resided there. Frank was the only occupant recorded in 1904. Daniel Hastings, a bartender, was the occupant in 1907.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: This Italianate style duplex residence was determined to be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C (architecture). At the time of the determination, September 1, 1987, the building appeared to contribute to the sense of time and place of the Museum Hill Historic District. That district is a collection of various late nineteenth century middle-class houses that demonstrate the feeling of St. Joseph's "Golden Age." Since that time the district boundaries have been defined without including this property and others in the immediate vicinity. Deterioration, abandonment, and demolitions have diminished the quality and number of resources so much that the sense of a district is no longer present in this area.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor. The building is very deteriorated and the interior has extensive fire damage.

B. Summary Description:

This a detached two-story six-bay duplex residence with side entrances. It is approximately 31 feet wide and 46 feet long. There are three bays in each side wall and 1/2 bays in the rear facade. In the rear the main block is indented approximately 5 feet on each side to form a rear entrance ell.

The building has a coursed rubble stone foundation. There is a basement under the front block with an entrance well in the north wall and two window openings in the south wall. Walls are brick masonry with the front facade laid in running bond and the side and rear walls laid in common bond. Since the building apparently was constructed in two distinct but similar phases, there are brick walls between the two sections. The interior partition walls are wood frame construction.

Although there is a shadow line indicating a full length one-story flat-roofed front porch, only the concrete deck remains. This is constructed of brick faced with rusticated concrete block. Concrete decks marking the location of rear porches also remain in each ell. There is an area of original flagstone paving along the south wall and a concrete sidewalk along the north wall. In the main block, there is a central front chimney with a deteriorated corbeled top and there are two interior chimneys in the rear wall which have been parged.

Masonry openings have arched brick lintels. Those in the front facade are ornamented with raised brick and incised stone keystones. Entrances have stone sills and overhead transoms. There is a massive stone step at the northeast rear entrance. This opening has a damaged paneled wooden door. Another glazed four-panel wooden entrance door remains in the southeast ell. The earliest surviving windows are 2/2 wooden double-hung sash in the rear second-floor facade. Others in the front and side facades are 1/1 sash. Some have been altered or removed.

The main block has a truncated hipped roof with asphalt shingle roofing. There is a hipped roof extending over the rear northeast section. Small gable roof dormers with divided lights are located in the north and south sides of the main roof.

The interior of the north section of this building has been extensively damaged by fire. The interior of the west section has been remodeled. Interior openings have been altered, the ceilings have been lowered, the walls have been covered with modern paneling, and the floors have been covered with vinyl flooring.

Alterations

Exterior alterations include a rear one-story concrete block addition. Original built-in eave gutters have been covered and half-round metal guttering installed. The masonry walls were painted white; the front sills and lintels were painted black. A rear second floor arched opening to the northeast has been altered and reduced in size. A basement window in the south wall has been filled with brick. There are two modern front entrance doors and one in the southeast ell.

- C. Site: This building is located on a major arterial street in a deteriorated residential neighborhood. There are several vacant lots and abandoned buildings in the vicinity. The structure occupies a moderately sloping site which rises to the east.

Two adjacent wood frame alley buildings at the rear of the lot, one-story and a one-and-a-half-stories, were recorded in the 1911 Sanborn map. Both of these structures have been demolished.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Bibliography:

Building Permit file: Lot 6, Block 39, Patee's Addition

Missouri-American Water Company. Water service permit #2363 (July 7, 1892)
Joseph Grief.

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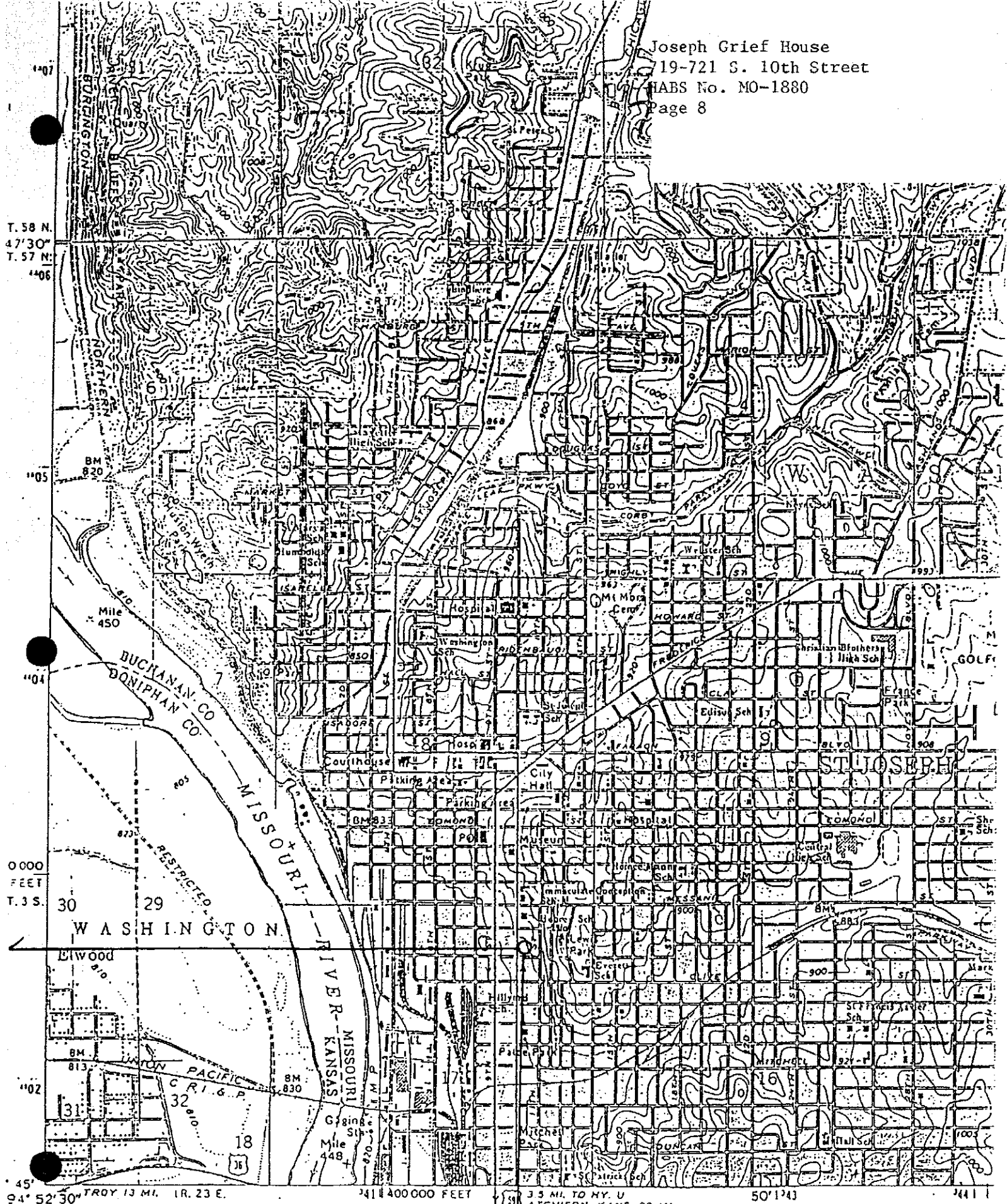
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Winder, Mary Jo. "PENN Neighborhood Survey Report," (July 29, 1988).
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Wolfenbarger, Deon. "Historic Resources of St. Joseph, Buchanan County,
Missouri" (June 20, 1988). National Register Residential Property Context
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Historic Preservation Program.

Prepared by: Dale E. Nimz
Associate Planner for Historic Preservation
City of St. Joseph Community Development Department
March 26, 1991

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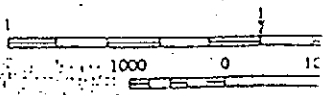
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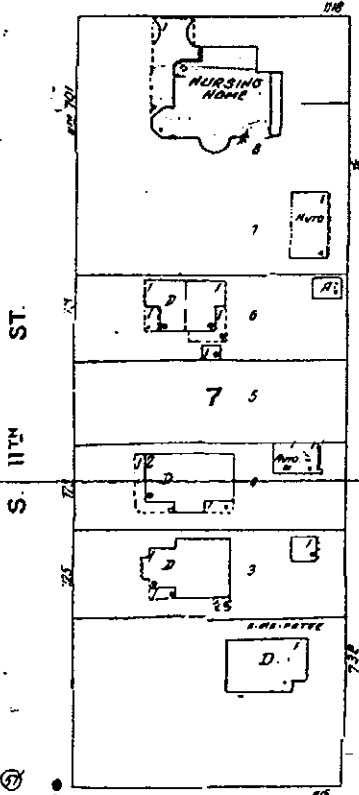
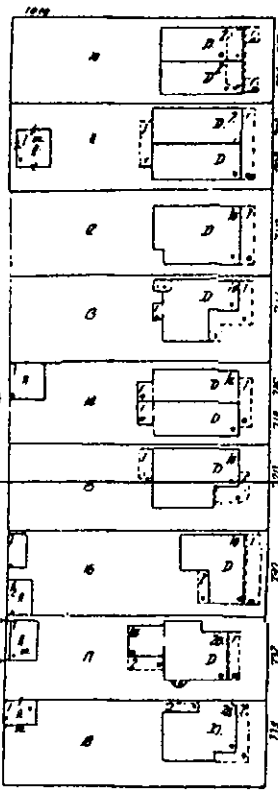
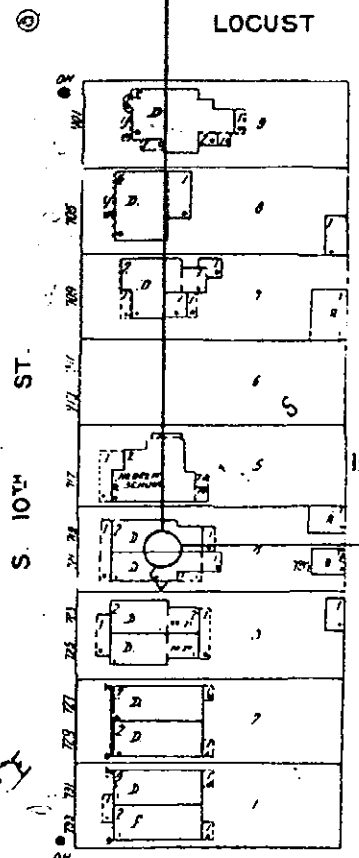
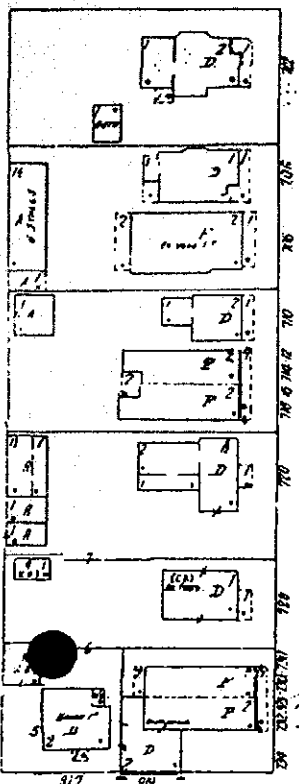
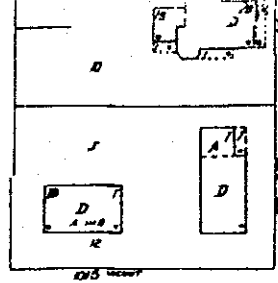
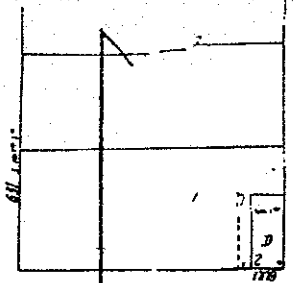
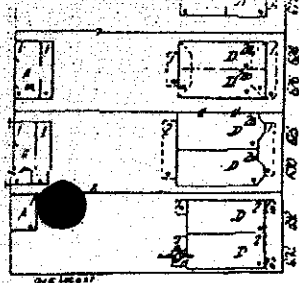
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial

19-721 S. 10th

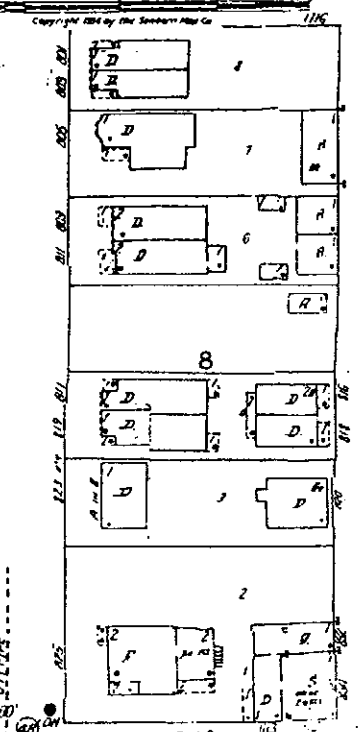
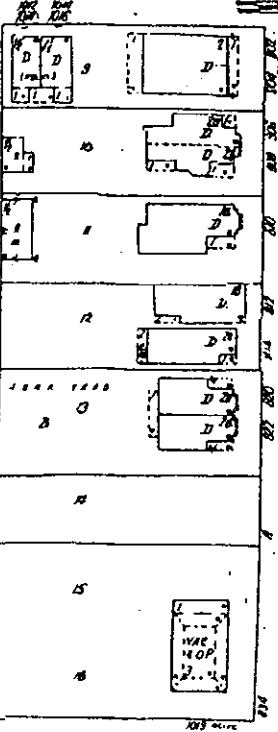
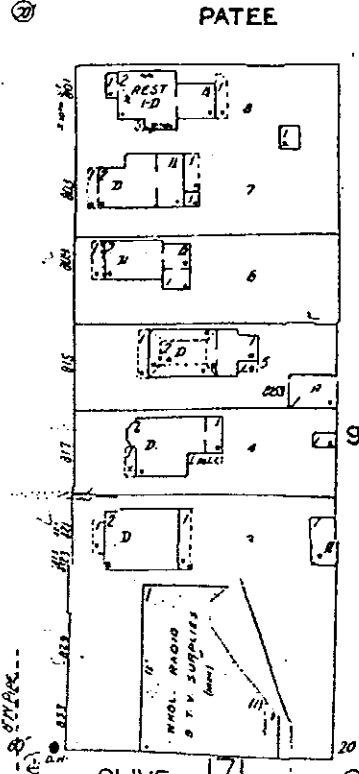
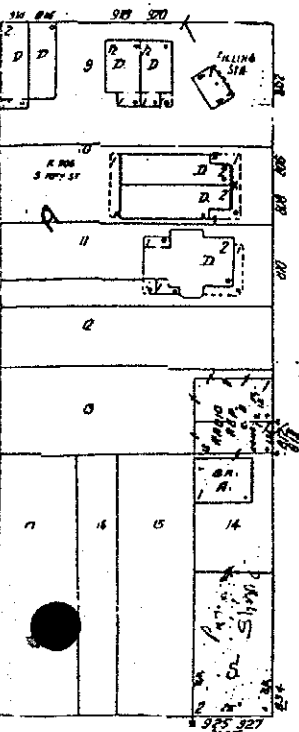
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